

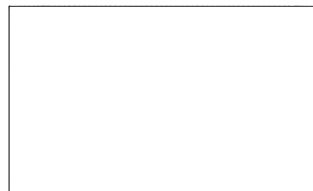
Top Secret 219

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Wednesday 23 November 1977 CG NIDC 77/272C

State Dept. review
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National Intelligence Daily Cable for Wednesday, 23 November 1977

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The NID Cable is for the purpose of informing senior US officials.

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ITALY: Violence and Pessimism

25X1 [] *Italian politicians and officials are depressed and pessimistic as they face an apparent worsening of political terrorism and disorder. Some of them are suggesting that a larger role for the Communists might provide the government with the enhanced authority it needs to deal with the situation.*

25X1 [] For months, terrorists of the far left have been arbitrarily attacking public figures--usually moderate editors and politicians--by shooting them in the legs. The recent attempt by the Red Brigades to murder the highly respected deputy editor of *La Stampa* by shooting him in the head--together with the terrorists' slogan of "aim higher"--may mean that the terror campaign, which has steadily increased over the past five years, will be heightened even more.

25X1 [] Interior Minister Cossiga told the Italian Senate on 15 November that far left and far right terrorists had carried

[]
out 1,693 political crimes--shootings, bombings, kidnappings--in the first ten months of this year. The toll in 1977 will be roughly double that of 1976, itself twice that of 1975.

25X1 [] The Italian police forces are weary, discouraged, and demoralized by what they see as an unequal struggle against terrorism, disorder, and crime. Forty policemen and carabinieri have been killed so far this year and 3,000 wounded. Law enforcement authorities still do not feel that they have the legal means or the organization to handle their overwhelming problems. The recent reorganization of Italian counterintelligence has created confusion; improved efficiency will be slow in coming.

25X1 [] The police also fear that they will be faced by mass demonstrations they cannot control. Their record in this area is much better than on the terrorist front, and the US Embassy in Rome estimates that in most cases they will be able to keep order.

25X1 [] Deteriorating economic conditions could aggravate already critical tensions among the large masses of unemployed youth and students and trigger violent demonstrations. Although they have been able to contain such outbreaks in the past, the police apparently are concerned that their disciplined but hard-pressed forces might lose control and fire into a mob. If this happened, law and order throughout Italy could break down in a series of destructive retaliatory riots.

25X1 [] The preoccupation with public order is leading many politicians to question whether Prime Minister Andreotti's minority government has enough authority to deal with the situation. No other minority Christian Democratic government would be stronger, however, and some leftist and centrist government leaders now advocate Andreotti's replacement with a "national emergency" coalition including the Communists.

25X1 [] Although Christian Democratic president Moro ruled out such a government last week, he left the door open to a larger Communist role in government policymaking. Moro argued that a Communist push for actual government membership now would destabilize rather than calm the situation. He suggested instead that the limited agreement reached with the Communists

[redacted]

last summer--under which they have a formal say in several key policy areas--could be expanded to include problems not foreseen then. The original agreement produced numerous recommendations in the law and order field, but the feeling has grown that the government will have to do more.

25X1 [redacted] Moro's suggestion is likely to appeal to the Communists. The notion of an expanded policy role is consistent with their desire to move gradually toward a formal governing role, minimizing the possibility of a conservative backlash and further rightwing violence. Moreover, it would permit them to claim something less than full responsibility for any future government measures that are labeled "repressive" by the left. Given the resistance of both Christian Democrats and Communists, only a very serious and prolonged breakdown of public order is likely to lead a government of "national emergency." [redacted]

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BENIN: Cuban and Soviet Attention

25X1 [redacted] //The Cubans and Soviets are paying increased attention to the West African state of Benin, probably in response to the regime's appeals in January for security assistance.//

25X1 [redacted] In January, exiled opponents of President Kerekou's radical, self-styled "Marxist-Leninist" regime organized an abortive raid on Cotonou. Since then, the Benin Government has increased its contacts with Cuba. In April, a Cuban ambassador took up residence and was given the place of honor at Benin's May Day celebration. The Cuban and Beninese Foreign Ministers have exchanged visits.

25X1 [redacted]

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[] Soviet naval vessels have been calling at Cotonou port since early this year. The first Soviet vessel arrived in February from Conakry, Guinea, a country that has welcomed the protection symbolized by Soviet ships since an abortive, Portuguese-backed attack in 1970. Since February, the visits to Cotonou by Soviet ships operating off the West African coast--formerly limited to calls at Conakry and Luanda, Angola--have become routine. In light of Benin's instability, however, the Soviets are likely to be cautious about establishing facilities at Cotonou on the level of those they already have in Conakry and Luanda.

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[] Pro-Western leaders of West African states are likely to become concerned that the increased Soviet and Cuban involvement in Benin is a further expansion of Communist influence on the continent.

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[] From Benin's perspective, the military assistance it has received from the Communists probably does not compensate for the loss of French assistance. France decided last year to withdraw its military attache and advisers and to suspend its annual grant of materiel aid.

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[] Although Kerekou's regime has embarked on a "revolutionary" development path apparently modeled after North Korea and China, the increased Soviet and Cuban attention to Benin may lessen its identification with its Asian mentors. []

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SYRIA: Western Arms Purchases

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[] *Syria reportedly is negotiating the purchase of military support equipment from several West European countries, but financing problems thus far have impeded the conclusion of contracts.*

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[] Syria is talking with the British about purchasing radar, communications equipment, and a computer support facility for its Air Force, and support items for the Army, including night vision equipment, replacement gunsights for Soviet T-62 tanks, and radios for armored vehicles. The Syrians are also negotiating for the French MM-38 antiship missile system for the Navy's Osa missile boats.

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[REDACTED] The Soviets cannot be pleased with this development, but there is no evidence that they have objected to selected arms transactions with the West. In the judgment of the US defense attache in Damascus, the Soviets' primary concern is that Western contract or military personnel do not obtain access to sensitive Soviet equipment. // Syria will continue to rely on the USSR for major armaments. //

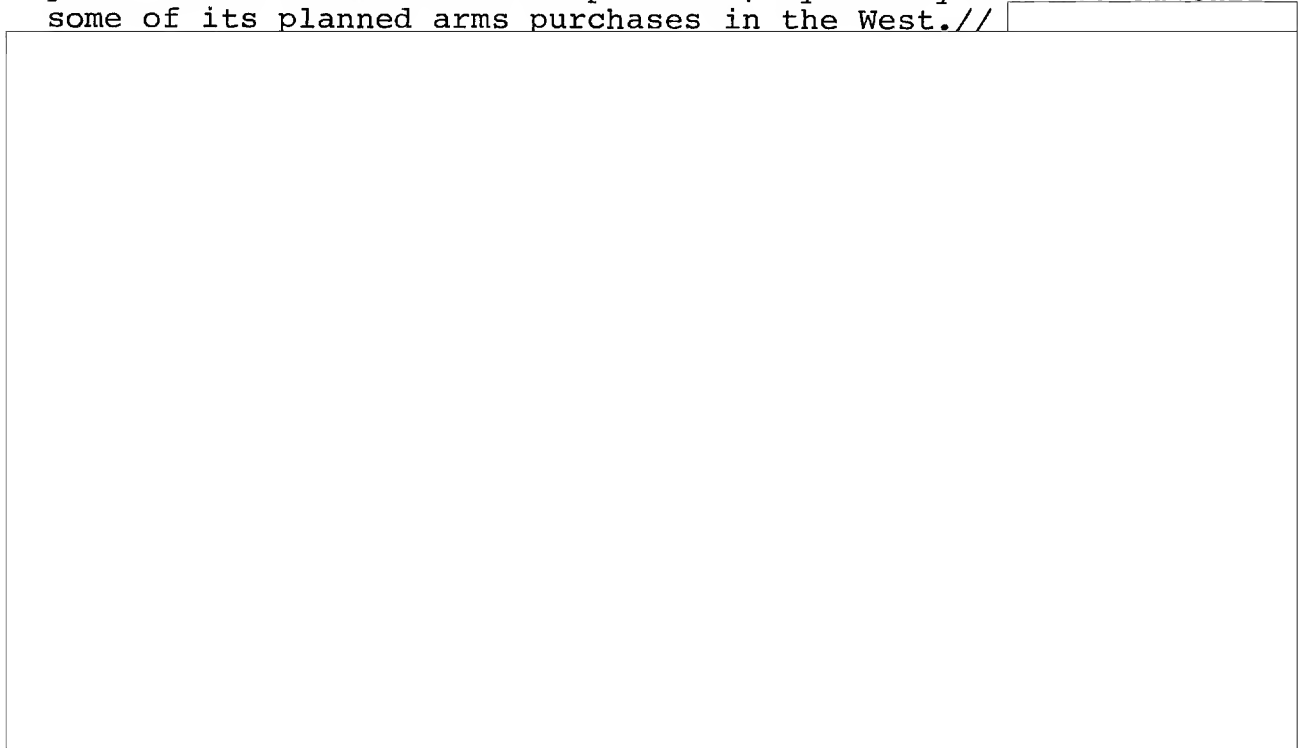
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[REDACTED] // Financial arrangements appear to be the main stumbling block to the completion of contract negotiations. Syria's chronic shortage of funds for arms procurement has been exacerbated by the expense of retaining a military presence in Lebanon. West European suppliers apparently are requiring sizable downpayments on purchases and in some cases asking for cash on delivery. //

25X1

[REDACTED] // Although Arab oil countries have made significant contributions to the Syrian military in recent years, most of the funds have been used for such activities as budget support. Unless more funds are provided, Syria may have to curtail some of its planned arms purchases in the West. //

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CAMBODIA: Party Purges Continue

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[] //Cambodia's leaders have apparently carried out a "rectification" campaign in the northern provinces that extends to the lowest levels of the party, and they are publicly linking the purges to an alleged plot against the regime.//

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[] //Purges in the northern provinces began in early 1977, when senior military and party leaders there were arrested and apparently executed. Many purged leaders were accused of being CIA agents or of planning a coup.//

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[] //The entire military and administrative structure in the north was subsequently reorganized, and new leaders were brought in from other areas. Lower ranking members of the party leadership committees were also gradually demoted and replaced.//

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[] //In mid-October, the regime reportedly expanded its campaign against cadre suspected of disloyalty. All party members in the military brigade in the north who had been appointed by the former leaders, and even party Youth League members, were arrested and imprisoned.//

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[] //We have no firm evidence that there was a coup attempt. [] the regime is actually

[redacted]

moving against "bureaucratism" and weak discipline within the party and is bringing in younger, more revolutionary cadre. Charges that the purged party members are counterrevolutionaries and CIA agents may be designed to undercut party resistance to the harsh "rectification" program.//

25X1 [redacted] //Rather than indicating a real concern over the threat of an internal uprising or coup attempt, the recent moves in the north also may reflect increased leadership confidence.//

[redacted]

USSR - NORTH KOREA: Kapitsa Visit

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25X1 [redacted] //The head of the Soviet Foreign Ministry's Far East Department, Mikhail Kapitsa, recently returned from North Korea. The visit may have been to plan future high-level exchanges between Moscow and Pyongyang.//

25X1 [redacted] //In September, Kapitsa told [redacted] that a Soviet Politburo member would visit North Korea this year to reciprocate the visit of Premier Pak to Moscow in January. This would be the first trip to Pyongyang by a Politburo-level official since First Deputy Premier Mazurov went there in 1971.//

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25X1 [redacted] //No senior member of the Soviet Politburo has visited Pyongyang since Premier Kosygin's visit in 1965, reflecting the cooling of relations and President Kim Il-song's tilt toward Peking during the 1970s. The stature of the Soviet Politburo representative will indicate the seriousness that Moscow ascribes to the idea of improving ties with Pyongyang.//

25X1 [redacted] //Kapitsa and one of his deputies have also said recently that Kim may visit Moscow next year. Kim has not visited Moscow since 1961 and has been seeking an invitation to the Soviet capital since last year as a gesture to restore some balance in his ties with Moscow and Peking. The Soviets have repeatedly put him off, in part because of their desire not to be associated with his hostile attitude toward the US. Moscow now may believe that Kim, having moderated his stance, will not cause them serious embarrassment. [redacted]

25X1

GREECE: Election Results

25X1 [] *The reduced popular vote for Greek Prime Minister Caramanlis in Sunday's election, and the resulting lower parliamentary majority together with the strong showing of left-ist leader Andreas Papandreou, probably will complicate but not derail any plans Caramanlis may have for bold domestic and foreign policy initiatives. Papandreou's resurgence, however, may eventually upset Greece's otherwise smooth transition to democratic rule.*

25X1 [] Caramanlis' center-right New Democracy received 42.2 percent of the popular vote and 174 of 300 parliamentary seats, down from the 54.4 percent and 220 seats it won in 1974. Papandreou's Panhellenic Socialist Movement won 25.2 percent of the vote and 91 seats, up dramatically from 13.6 percent and 12 seats in the last election. George Mavros' Union of the Democratic Center lost its position as the main opposition party; it obtained only 12.2 percent of the vote and 15 seats, compared to 20.2 percent and 60 seats in 1974.

25X1 [] Running on its own for the first time in 40 years, the pro-Soviet Communist Party won 8.9 percent of the vote and 11 seats while the ultra-right National Camp received 6.9 percent of the vote and five seats.

25X1 [] The voters' support for Caramanlis was somewhat less than he expected. He indirectly blamed the results on the National Camp, which was a stalking horse for monarchists and sympathizers of the junta and took away votes from rightists who might otherwise have supported his party.

25X1 [] Papandreou declared that he was the real winner and promised to continue his policies emphasizing change and national independence. Papandreou's chauvinistic rhetoric, particularly on the economic drawbacks of EC membership, emphasis on bread and butter issues, and clear appeal for the protest vote evidently impressed many Greeks.

25X1 [] Mavros attributed his party's poor showing to the polarization of Greek political life. This was an allusion to the eclipse of his party's role as the main opposition by Papandreou's more vociferous criticism of the Caramanlis government. The Union's poor performance could mean that Mavros will have to step down as party leader.

25X1

[] With a parliamentary majority that would still be the envy of many West European leaders, Caramanlis is not likely to permit the election results to constrain him as he seeks to solve Greece's pressing domestic and foreign policy problems. His hopes of eventually moving up to the presidency have most likely been dashed, since he probably can no longer muster the requisite two-thirds parliamentary majority to be elected. But he does have the absolute majority needed for approval of almost any domestic or foreign policy initiatives.

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[] Papandreou, however, views parliamentary politics as being complemented by street tactics, and this probably worries Caramanlis. The Prime Minister must also contend with the rightists, some of whom might see Papandreou as enough of a threat to resort to antidemocratic activity. Caramanlis may well see a coalition with Mavros' party as the best means to broaden his base and withstand pressures from Papandreou and the extreme right.

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[] Papandreou for his part clearly has ambitions to succeed Caramanlis. To do so, he would need not only an electoral victory, but the acquiescence of the military, which intervened to stop his bid for power in 1967.

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[] Preliminary indications are that he will continue to refuse to cooperate with the other opposition parties in an effort to set himself apart and retain the protest vote. By refusing to cooperate with the Communists, he hopes to win the confidence of the military. At the same time, he is likely to make a pitch for the remaining constituents of Mavros' Union of the Democratic Center by emphasizing legal opposition tactics and moderating his social and economic programs.

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[] So long as Caramanlis is in charge, Papandreou is not likely to be anything more than a gadfly, particularly if the economy continues to do relatively well and Caramanlis can achieve at least some successes in foreign policy, such as gaining EC membership for Greece. Papandreou could play a much larger role in the post-Caramanlis era, however, especially since there is no other Greek politician who can match his appeal. []

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BRIEFS

Yugoslavia

25X1 [] The leader of the illegal pro-Soviet party in Yugoslavia, Mileta Perovic, has been arrested and put in prison to await trial. Legal proceedings against Perovic, secretary general of the anti-Titoist party formed in Montenegro in April 1974, promise to spark official leaks and rumors implicating orthodox Communist Yugoslav emigres with the Soviets and their East European allies.

25X1 [] Perovic's capture is a coup for the Yugoslav security services. He was a co-founder of the illegal party and until early 1976 enjoyed Soviet protection as a resident of Kiev. He slipped back into Yugoslavia illegally sometime after July 1976. Leadership of the pro-Soviet "Cominformists" may now fall to Bogdan Jovovic, an emigre who left Kiev with Perovic last year.

25X1 [] The subversive group is foundering under the Tito regime's pressure, and the authorities will be somewhat more at ease with Perovic in jail. Belgrade, however, is unlikely to ease its vigilance since over 700 Cominformists, according to recent Yugoslav estimates, still reside in Eastern Europe. The regime, moreover, occasionally floats the Soviet threat to warn Yugoslavs that their petty squabbles only invite foreign interference. []

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Romania

25X1 [] Dissident Romanian author Paul Goma, the central figure in the country's small and fragmented dissident community, arrived in Paris on Sunday with his wife and child. They are traveling on a one-year tourist visa.

25X1 [] It is not clear whether the authorities will permit Goma to return, although in 1972 they allowed him to depart under similar circumstances and to return a year later. The regime may be gambling that Goma's wife--who reportedly is weary of his dissident activities--will prevail upon him to stay in the West.

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[REDACTED] The regime apparently allowed Goma to leave in order to avoid embarrassing publicity about Romania's record on human rights during the Belgrade talks on European security. Most of the country's persistent activists have either received their travel documents or have been told to expect them soon. Like Goma, all the others have obtained tourist visas, but they had to sign statements saying they no longer wished to emigrate.

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[REDACTED] If these dissidents do not return, they then become subject to criminal penalties as defectors under Romanian law.

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Spain - Western Sahara

[] The Algerian-backed Polisario Front has admitted attacking a Spanish fishing boat last week and capturing three crewmen. A communique issued on Monday in Algiers warns that any foreigners going into the "zone of conflict" risk becoming "involved" in the dispute.

Denmark

[] The Danish Government is urging the nomination of former Prime Minister Poul Hartling to the post of UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Hartling's departure from Denmark would open his Moderate Liberal Party to a policy debate and leadership competition which might not be settled before the party conference next fall.

[] The popularity of the Liberals has been declining since 1973, when Hartling won the leadership of a center-right government. The party was then second--it is now fourth--of about a dozen parliamentary parties. Large farm owners, who formed the party's traditional base, are a dwindling part of the electorate, and the party's brief success in attracting urban middle class voters in 1973 has not been sustained. The choice of a new leader will turn on his ability to attract a new following for the party.

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